

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS  
MEETING OF THE EGREMONT MUNICIPAL HOUSING TRUST BOARD  
MINUTES

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Date: October 5, 2023  
Time: 8:00am  
Place: Via Zoom Meeting  
Egremont

Present in-person were Chairman Richard Stanley, Vice-Chairman Craig Barnum , Treasurer Bob Noonan, Secretary Mary Brazie, and member Lucinda Vermeulen  
Others participating via zoom: Mary McGurn and for part of the meeting George McGurn.

It was announced that the meeting is video and audio recorded.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the September 28 meeting were accepted with minor edits.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Board agreed that its long-term goal is to have some amount of housing within one year. Its short-term goal is to determine what to do with the Town's 6.2 acre parcel at Town Hall that has been designated for housing.

The town hall parcel has a 10 bedroom septic system, a low capacity well that tested with low levels of PFAS, access via the driveway to the Transfer Station, electric poles nearby, and two areas excavated for placement of homes. The parcel lacks legal frontage on Route 71 if split from the town land.

Chairman Stanley proposed placement of tiny homes, which would require amendment to zoning bylaws. It was noted that Tiny Homes are not taxed as real estate, they are taxed as personal property.

Vice-Chairman Barnum proposed selling the parcel to an abutting property owner. Member Vermeulen said that the property is likely valued at about \$150,000. Chairman Stanley said the value of the infrastructure alone was worth \$220,000.. Vice-Chairman Barnum also proposed consideration of stick built housing on the site which is estimated at \$250 a square foot to build.

Some form of modular was also proposed. Modular construction allows the Town to circumvent certain procurement laws making such construction easier to afford.

A request for proposals would likely be issued to manage any form of rentals constructed on the site.

Further details will be discussed at the next meeting in regards to all the suggestions for the town parcel and members will research tiny homes, costs for stick built, and will view the site.

Town's cannot file for 501c3 non-profit status. Federal regulation 170c1 allows donations to specific Town projects to be tax deductible. There remains the option to have a local non-profit administer funding. Chairman Stanley noted that through special legislation, donations to the Community Development Corporation allow for an additional tax credit.

Community Preservation Act designates 10% of proceeds for housing, 10% to historic preservation and 10% to open space. The other 70% can be designated to any of the above.

Board members signed the Declaration of Trust that must be filed with the Registry of Deeds.

35% of the Short-term Rental Impact fee was designated to benefit housing. Secretary Brazie has asked the Town Accountant Treasurer to segregate these funds. It is estimated that there is just over \$7500 available. These funds are set up in an interest bearing account with the interest going to the general fund.

A housing trust account will be established with the first donation. This is a separate interest bearing account for which the interest remains with the account. Richard Stanley made a donation of \$10 to establish the account.

Secretary Brazie will determine the time line and steps for getting zoning amendments before the voters.

A press release seeking donations will be issued when the Board has a primary project to promote.

Egremont's Town Counsel, Jeremia Pollard, will serve as legal counsel for the Board.

Funding sources can be donations, loans, or grants. The Board agreed that it is best to not apply for state and federal funding to avoid the restrictions placed on housing funded by such grants. At a later meeting Housing Committee co-chair Doug Mishkin will be asked to speak to control of local preference.

The Board will monitor the new state Secretary of Rural Government for housing initiatives as well as the Secretary of Housing. Funds for Under Utilized Properties may be useful.

Chairman Stanley proposed appointing associate members to the Board. Doug Mishkin, Eric Alicino, and Terry Moore. Member Vermeulen proposed getting more women involved.

Members proposed looking at available Egremont properties that could be redesigned into housing or housing could be constructed on:

72 Main Street - 8500 square foot with a living space and large open areas. On town water with a working septic system.

Lot on Bott Hill and Route 23 that has septic and a point for water but is not considered viable.

Former South Egremont Church though parking and septage could be an issue.  
Creamery Road 10 acre lot

Chairman Stanley will invite Ian Rasch to an upcoming meeting to talk about tiny homes, will set up a time to view tiny homes in Cheshire, will send tiny home renderings done by Linda of Creative Buildings Solutions, and will send a link to a tiny home community out west. Vice-Chairman Barnum will gather infrastructure costs for a stick built homes including electric, water and sewer. Secretary Brazie will distribute the SK Design report on the town parcel and see if there were estimates from Construct on supply electricity to the two homes that were supposed to be moved to the Town parcel. Member Vermeulen will set up an appointment to view 72 Main Street. Treasurer Noonan will get information on the Creamery Road lot.

Meeting adjourned at 9:53am.

Mary Brazie,  
Office Administrator

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*The recording of the meeting is posted on the town's web page. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.*